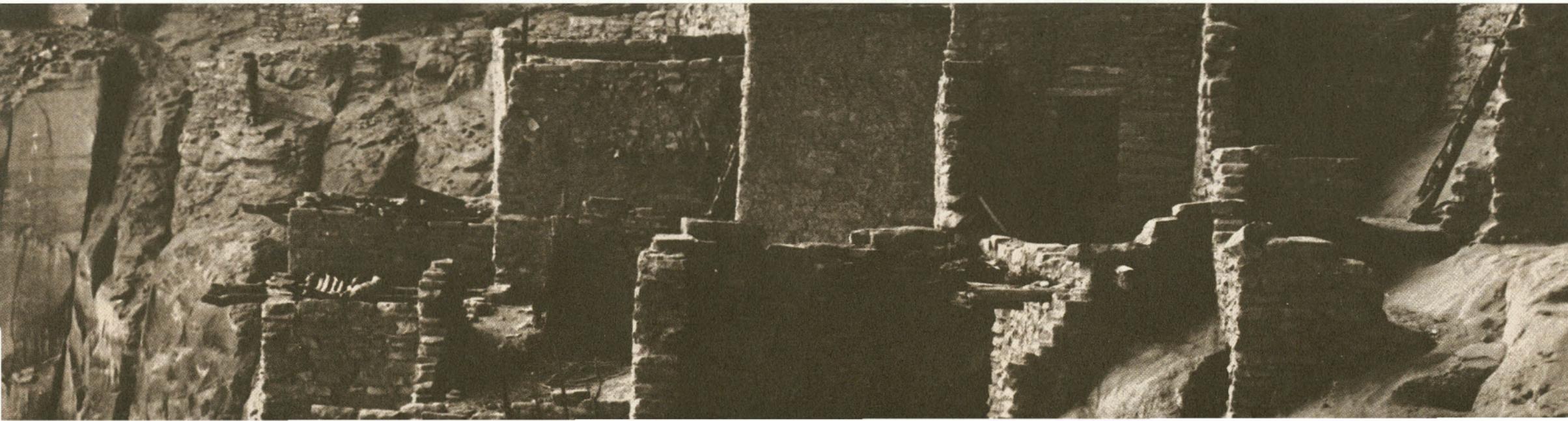
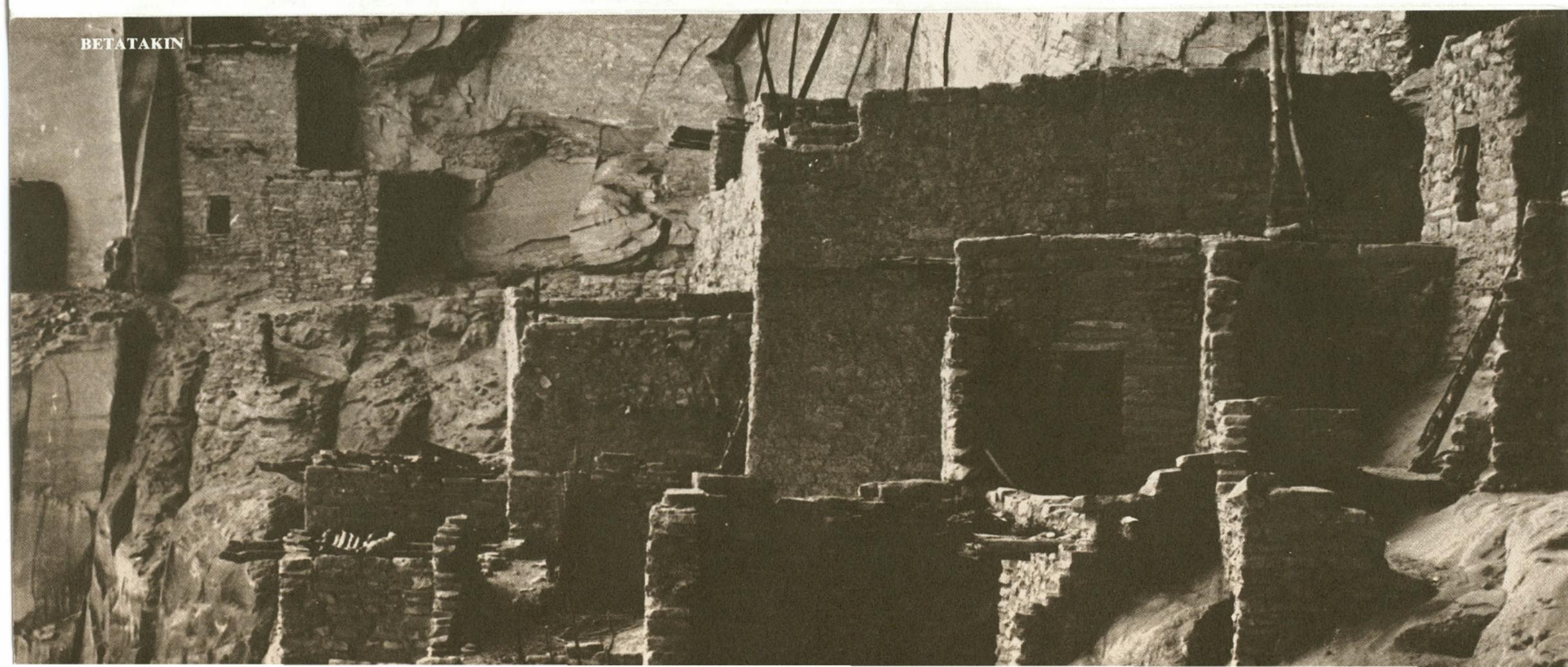


N A V A J O



BETATAKIN



BETATAKIN The name means "Ledge House" in Navajo. This is the most accessible ruin in the monument. Resting on the steeply sloping floor of a large natural alcove with a roof nearly 500 feet high, Betatakin was constructed and abandoned in two generations, between 1250 and 1300. The 135 rooms include living quarters, granaries, and one kiva or ceremonial chamber. It seems likely that additional kivas once existed here and have been destroyed by rockfall, since large pueblos such as this have usually been found to contain numerous ceremonial structures.

The towering red sandstone walls of Betatakin Canyon also shelter a pocket of quaking aspen, Douglas-fir, scrub oak, and boxelder. The trail to the ruin leads through this small grove in the canyon bottom—a shady haven in the midst of the stunted pinyons and junipers that surround the canyon.

The ruin was discovered in 1909 by Byron Cummings, a pioneer archeologist of the Southwest, and John Wetherill, a rancher and trader who, along with his older brother Richard, discovered many of the major Anasazi cliff dwellings in the San Juan region. Betatakin was stabilized in 1917 by Neil M. Judd, of the Smithsonian Institution.

You may see Betatakin from the viewpoint at the end of Sandal Trail at any time, without a guide. The 1-mile round-trip walk from the visitor center takes about 1 hour. Binoculars will prove useful.

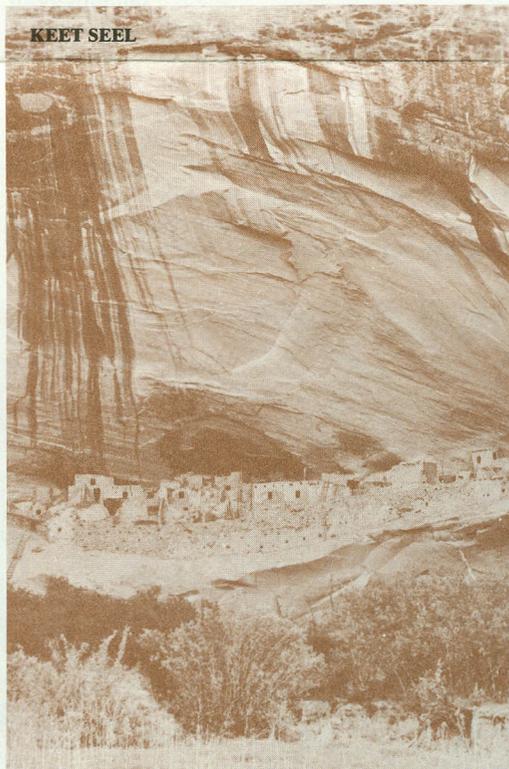
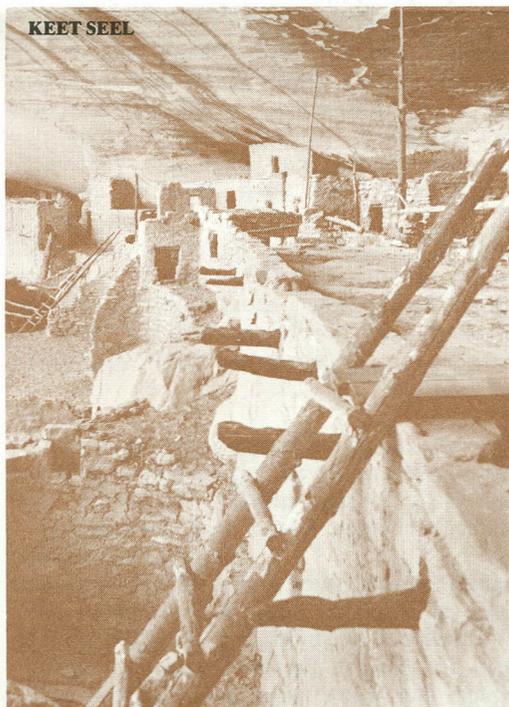
You may visit Betatakin only with a park ranger. Scheduled tours, limited to 20 persons each, are conducted in spring, summer, and fall, weather and personnel permitting. The round trip hike takes about 3 hours and involves strenuous climbing on the way back. Because the canyon is 700 feet deep—equal to a 70-story building—and the altitude is 7,200 feet, the hike can be tiring. If you have heart trouble, don't attempt it. Even if you are physically fit, move slowly, rest often.



KEET SEEL Richard Wetherill discovered this ruin in 1895. The largest cliff dwelling in Arizona has about 160 rooms—living quarters, storage rooms, courtyards, and 5 or 6 kivas.

Keet Seel, "Broken Pottery" in Navajo, gives the impression of having been abandoned for only a few years—not for seven centuries.

You may visit Keet Seel from May through September, weather and personnel permitting, but you must register at park headquarters; advance reservations are recommended. Visitation is limited to 20 persons per day and 1,500 per year. The 8-mile primitive trail to the ruin crosses the canyon stream many times. You can go by foot or obtain horses from Navajo Indians through the superintendent. The hike is arduous, and a full day is needed for the round trip. All visitors to Keet Seel must be accompanied by a ranger.



INSCRIPTION HOUSE This ruin is at the base of a high-arching sandstone cliff on the north side of an arm of Nitsin Canyon. It consists of about 74 living quarters and granaries and one kiva. A tree-ring date of 1274 indicates that Inscription House was built about the same time as Betatakin and Keet Seel.

The ruin is named for an inscription noted in 1909 by Byron Cummings and John Wetherill on the plastered wall of one of the rooms. Later, John Wetherill recalled that the still legible letters read—"C H O S 1661 A d n." The date may be 1861.

Inscription House is closed indefinitely to the public.

TREE RING DATING An approximate date for the construction of a prehistoric building can be determined by comparing the pattern of annual growth rings of trees used in the construction with the known pattern of tree growth for the area. Trees add new growth each year, and the thickness of this new growth in the trunk of the tree is determined by the amount of rainfall in the area that year. Since rainfall varies from year to year, a distinctive pattern of new growth rings develops over a period of years. This distinctive growth pattern is the basis for this dating method, fixing in time the calendar year in which any particular tree was cut.

